DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 168 307 FL 010 126

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TITLE A Brief Dictionary of Grammatical Terminology for Students and Teachers of French.
PUB DATE Dec 78
NOTE 23p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Case (Grammar); *Form Classes (Languages); *French; *Grammar; Higher Education; *Language Instruction; Language Patterns; Morphology (Languages); Secondary Education; *Second Language Learning; Sentences; Sentence Structure; Syntax; *Traditional Grammar; Vocabulary
IDENTIFIERS *Grammatical Terminology

ABSTRACT

A glossary of commonly used grammatical terms that would be useful to students and teachers of French is presented here. Although not complete, it offers basic definitions in English of grammatical forms and functions as well as examples in French of each term defined. The definitions cover parts of speech, grammatical functions, sentences, phrases, and clauses. (Author/AMH)

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A BRIEF DICTIONARY OF GRAMMATICAL TERMINOLOGY FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS OF FRENCH

NOTE: This dictionary, while not complete, does offer the student and teacher basic definitions of grammatical terminology both in French and in English with examples of the term defined given in French. Words or terms which are defined elsewhere are marked with an asterisk (*).

* *

ACTIVE VOICE (la voix active): The subject "performs" the action indicated by the verb*.

Jean (Subject (actor)) voit (Action (active)) Marie.

ADJECTIVE (un adjectif): A word giving a description or descriptive characteristic of a noun*.

Une grande voiture rouge.

Le premier astronaute américain.

ADVERB (un adverbe): A word modifying a verb*, adjective* or other adverb. Many French adverbs end in -ment (equivalent to the English -ly.).

Il parle vite.

Elle est très intelligente.

Elles ont beaucoup trop bu.

ADVERBIAL PRONOUN (un pronom adverbial): Refers to the conjunctive object pronouns* Y and EN which function as adverbs of location and as non-personal indirect objects*.

Je viens de France.	J'en viens.
Je vais au Canada.	J'y vais.
Il joue au tennis.	Il y joue.
Il joue du piano.	Il en joue.

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ADVERBIAL OBJECT (le complément circonstanciel): A word or group of words providing information outside the action of the verb but relating to the verb. The most common adverbial objects are of

CAUSE: Il s'est fâché par jalousie.

TIME: Je suis ici depuis mars.

PLACE: Il va en Europe.

GOAL: Il étudie pour réussir.

MANNER: Il est entré en courant.

AGREEMENT (l'accord): A phenomenon by which a word assumes the gender, number or person of another word with which it is closely linked. Used in speaking of adjectives, verb forms, determiners.

La grande voiture noire. Elle s'est levée.

Les films? Je les ai vus.

ANTECEDENT (l'antécédent): The noun or idea which a pronoun replaces or refers to. Means "goes before."

J'ai un prof. Elle est française. J'ai un prof qui est...

français.

Tu es malade? C'est dommage.

ASPIRATE H (h aspiré): An initial h of a word which, although silent, functions as if that word began with a consonant, thus prohibiting elision* and liaison*. In most dictionaries, it is indicated by an asterisk(*).

le héros les héros la hache

ATONIC PRONOUN (un pronom atone): see CONJUNCTIVE PRONOUN

AUXILIARY VERB (le verbe auxiliaire): Also called "helping word."* Of two types: primary and secondary [modal].

PRIMARY: a verb used in combination with another verb form to indicate a change in tense: have, had, shall, will, would, etc. It indicates the TIME of the action specified by the past participle*. In French, the auxiliary verbs are avoir and être.

J'ai parlé. Nous nous serons amusés.

Elle est partie. Ils avaient étudié.

SECONDARY: also called MODAL*. Can occur in any tense, but does not change the time of the action, but the mood* or aspect of the action. The common French secondary auxiliary verbs are: savoir, vouloir, pouvoir, devoir.

Il veut aller. Nous n'avons pas pu y

Elle aurait dû être ici. aller.

BASE (la racine): The simple form of a word to which are added inflectional endings.

ils parlent les grandes oeuvres

CAUSATIVE FAIRE (faire causatif, faire factitif): A construction using any tense of faire + infinitive to indicate that the subject caused or had something done by another party.

Le prof a fait chanter la chanson par la classe.

CLAUSE (une proposition): Contains a subject and a verb, and in part or wholly, makes up a sentence.

Il est venu et j'en suis content.

COMMON NOUN (un nom commun): The non-capitalized name of a person, place, idea, abstraction, or thing.

la beauté	l'honneur
le garçon	une table
le chat	une auto

COMPLEMENT (le complément d'objet): Synonym of "object." Completes the idea of the verb. See: DIRECT OBJECT, INDIRECT OBJECT, ADVERBIAL OBJECT.

COMPLEX INVERSION (l'inversion complexe): Used in asking questions. A noun subject* of a verb* is repeated in the form of a pronoun*--identical in gender* and in number* with this noun subject, and is placed after the verb and attached to it with a hyphen.

Paul est-il venu. Marie s'est-elle bien amusée?

Pourquoi Luc a-t-il répété la question?

COMPLEX SENTENCE : A sentence containing a principal clause* (in which the basic meaning of the sentence is set forth) and at least one subordinate clause*.

Je le ferai quand j'aurai le temps.

Principal clause — Subordinate Clause

COMPOUND SENTENCE (une phrase composée): A sentence containing two or more principal clauses* and no subordinate clauses*. Quite frequently, compound sentences are connected by coordinating conjunctions* or simply by punctuation (comma or semi-colon).

Je travaile parce que je l'aime.

La température a baissé et il s'est fait froid.

Paul est venu, c'est vrai.

COMPOUND-COMPLEX SENTENCE: A sentence which contains two or more main clauses* and at least one subordinate clause*.

La cloche a sonné et les enfants ont quitté l'édifice pendant que les professeurs regardaient.

COMPOUND TENSE (un temps composé): A verb tense or form composed of an auxiliary verb* + a past participle*.

J'ai écrit.

Ils avaient voyagé.

Tu auras dîné.

Elle serait venue.

...que Luc soit tombé.

...qu'il eût vaincu.

COMPOUND WORD (un mot composé): Two or more words which, when used together, generally convey a single meaning differing from the individual components.

une jeune fille

une machine à coudre

un pot à fleurs

des petits pois

des jeunes gens

un tue-mouche

CONDITIONAL MOOD (le mode conditionnel): Presents an action as eventual or dependent on a condition. Used primarily in hypothetical sentences containing a si-clause.

Il parlerait sans cesse s'il le pouvait.

Je serais allé en France si j'avais eu assez d'argent.

CONDITIONAL PERFECT TENSE (le passé du conditionnel): Also called "past conditional." Formed with the conditional tense* of the auxiliary verb* + past participle*. A tense almost entirely used in hypothetical sentences stating what would have happened if a certain condition had been met.

Je serais allé en France si j'avais eu assez d'argent.

CONDITIONAL TENSE (le temps conditionnel): Also called "future in the past." Is used primarily in indirect questions*. Implies that, in relation to a past action, another action will take place in the future, with both of these actions being past in relation to now.

Je vous ai dit que je le ferais à 6h.

Past — Future in relation to when I told you

CONJUGATION (la conjugaison): The system of changes in the verb according to person*, number*, tense*, voice*, mood*, etc. To conjugate a verb is to give an infinitive* a time reference, a person, a voice, a mood. There are four basic, regular conjugations in French as determined by infinitive endings:

1. -ER
2. -IR
3. -RE
4. -OIR

CONVERSATIONAL PAST: See PASSE COMPOSE

CONJUNCTION (une conjonction): A word connecting clauses*. May be

(a) COORDINATING: connecting two independent clauses*: et, ni, puis, aussi, ensuite, ou, mais, au contraire, cependant, car, donc, etc.

(b) SUBORDINATING: connecting an independent* and a subordinate* clause: quand, pour que, de peur que, comme, parce que, bien que, si, pourvu que, que, de sorte que, etc.

CONJUNCTIVE PRONOUN (un pronom conjonctif): (Latin cum+jungere= "joined with.") Also called "verb sattelites*", weak*, atonic* or unstressed* pronouns. They cannot occur alone, but must be used in conjunction with a verb. See: DIRECT OBJECT, INDIRECT OBJECT, ADVERBIAL OBJECT, REFLEXIVE PRONOUN, SUBJECT PRONOUN, ADVERBIAL PRONOUN.

COORDINATING CONJUNCTION (une conjonction de coordination): See CONJUNCTION.

COUNT NOUN: A noun that can be quantified or counted:

deux tasses cinq frères plusieurs amis

DEFECTIVE VERB: A verb which, by its nature and/or meaning, cannot be conjugated in all persons in any specific tense*. Most of these verbs appear in the third person* singular*.

falloir: il faut neiger: il neige

pleuvoir: il pleut s'agir de: il s'agit de

DEFINITE ARTICLE (un article défini): A determiner*. Has two basic functions:

a) Definite article proper: modifies and designates a specific or particular noun. Is equivalent to the English "the."

b) Used in a general sense: used in talking of things <u>in general</u>, of <u>all</u> <u>things</u>.

le livre
la pièce
les hommes

<u>Le</u> livre est sur <u>la</u> table.

<u>Les</u> Français aiment <u>le</u> vin.

DEMONSTRATIVE (démonstratif): Points out. Distinguishes the location of the object or person as near or far from the speaker.

<u>Cet</u> homme est intelligent.

<u>Ces</u> femmes sont très jolies.

<u>Celui</u> que vous voyez est le président.

<u>Ceux</u> qui étudient réussiront.

DEMONSTRATIVE ADJECTIVE (un adjectif démonstratif): A determiner* modifying a noun by specifying it as near or far from the speaker. For clarification of location, -<u>ci</u> or -<u>là</u> may be attached to the noun.

<u>Ce</u> livre est intéressant.

<u>Cet</u> hôtel est ancien.

<u>Cette</u> femme est russe.

<u>Ces</u> hommes-<u>ci</u> sont avocats.

<u>Ces</u> femmes-<u>là</u> sont profs.

DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUN (un pronom démonstratif): A pronoun specifying nearness or distance from the speaker. May never stand alone in French; must be followed by:

a) a prepositional phrase;

b) a relative pronoun*;

c) -ci or -là.

Je préfère celui-ci. Nous adorons ceux-ci.

Elle aime celle-là.

Elles achètent celles qu'elles ont vues.

Celui à qui vous parlez est le plus intelligent.

DEPENDENT CLAUSE: See SUBORDINATE CLAUSE

DETERMINER (un déterminant): A word which actualizes a noun. Also called a "noun marker"*. Its basic function is to "announce" that a noun is following in the sentence. Must be distinguished from an adjective* which gives descriptive characteristics of a noun. Determiners place the noun in a context: it points out whether the noun is known or unknown, single or multiple, near or far, etc. In French, the basic determiners are

a) definite articles*;

b) indefinite articles*;

c) partitive articles*;

d) demonstrative adjectives*;

e) interrogative adjectives*;

f) possessive adjectives*.

DIRECT OBJECT (le complément d'objet direct): "Receives" the action of the verb in an active sentence*. Answers the question SUBJECT + VERB + QUI/QUOI? The conjunctive direct object pronoun* replaces the noun which functions as direct object.

Jean voit la jeune fille. Jean la voit.

Il regarde l'émission. Il la regarde.

DIRECT QUOTATION: The words of a speaker are cited as they were uttered:

Jean a dit: "Je viendrai vous voir."

DISJUNCTIVE PRONOUN (un pronom disjonctif): (Latin dis+ jungere = "not joined"). Also called tonic*, strong*, stressed* or emphatic* pronoun. They are not linked to the verb. They may stand alone. They do not make up the verb core of the sentence.

moi	nous
toi	vous
soi	eux
lui	elles
elle	

ELISION (l'élision): Dropping of a final letter of a word which precedes a word beginning with a vowel or mute h*. In French only the final -e of le, de, que, ce, me, te, se; the final -a of la; and the -i of si +il/ils may be elided.

EMPHATIC PRONOUNS: See DISJUNCTIVE PRONOUN

FUTURE IN THE PAST: See CONDITIONAL TENSE

FUTURE PERFECT TENSE (le futur antérieur): A future action that WILL HAVE BEEN COMPLETED before another future action takes place. Formed with the future tense* of the auxiliary verb* + past participle*.

Quand vous viendrez, j'aurai déjà dîné.

FUTURE TENSE (le futur): States that an action has not yet occurred but will occur in the future. Its use basically parallels that of the future tense in English.

Il viendra me voir. Elle sera ravie de vous voir.

GENDER (le genre): Masculine or feminine. Most nouns referring to men are masculine; most nouns referring to women are feminine. There is no neuter gender in French. All people, things, ideas, abstractions are either masculine or feminine. Gender is determined by noun endings or by reference.

la femme	le crayon
le garçon	la beauté

GERUND: See PRESENT PARTICIPLE

HELPING WORD: See AUXILIARY VERB

HISTORICAL PAST TENSE: See PASSE SIMPLE

IDIOM (un idiotisme): A group of words or an expression that has no definable or explicable grammatical relation to its separate components.

Il m'en veut. Il y a.... s'y prendre

IMPERATIVE MOOD (le mode impératif): Gives a command or makes a request. Exists only in the second person singular, first and second persons plural. Another form is introduced with QUE + subject + verb in the subjunctive.

Sortez d'ici. Allons au cinéma.

Passe-moi le sel, s'il vous plaît. Qu'il entre.

IMPERFECT SUBJUNCTIVE (l'imparfait du subjonctif): A literary tense occurring in formal, historical writing. Most frequently found in the third person singular or plural. Corresponds to the imperfect indicative* and the conditional* [future in the past].

Il s'en alla sans qu'elle le sût.

IMPERFECT TENSE (INDICATIVE) (l'imparfait de l'indicatif): A descriptive past tense. Specified times of beginning, ending or duration are not under consideration, only the fact that an action was in progress or that a state or condition was in existence in the past.

Il parlait à la classe. Elle était malade.

IMPERSONAL EXPRESSION (une locution impersonnelle): A verb form with a subject pronoun* which does not stand for a previously mentioned person or thing.

Il pleut. C'est dommage que tu ne le saches pas.

Il faut aller. Il est important d'étudier.

IMPERSONAL VERB (un verbe impersonnel): A verb that cannot be conjugated in all persons but can occur in all tenses. The verb denotes an action carried out by no specified agent. Occurs only in the third person singular.

Il faut... Il neige.

Il pleut. Il s'agit de....

INDEFINITE ARTICLE (un article indéfini): A determiner*. Modifies or specifies a noun as indefinite--not a specific thing, but A thing. It presents a noun as new, or as yet unknown. Indeterminate and not specific in quantity in the plural: des.

un homme une femme des gens

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE: See PRINCIPAL CLAUSE

INDICATIVE MOOD (le mode indicatif): States a fact or asks a question. Statements made or questions asked using the indicative are concerning real facts.

La terre est ronde.

Jean parle plusieurs langues.

Voulez-vous m'aider?

Où Luc a-t-il travaillé?

INDIRECT OBJECT (le complément d'objet indirect): States "to/for whom/what" the action of the verb is directed. Answers the questions: Subject + Verb + à qui/à quoi, pour qui/pour quoi, contre qui/contre quoi, de qui/de quoi. The conjunctive indirect object pronoun* replaces a noun functioning as an indirect object. When using the conjunctive indirect object pronoun, the preposition is included in the object pronoun form.

Il téléphone à sa mère. J'obéis à mon prof.

Il lui téléphone. Je lui obéis.

INDIRECT QUOTATION: The words of another person(s) are not cited as they were uttered but are related by a person at a time different from when they were spoken.

Jean m'a dit qu'il viendrait me voir.

INFINITIVE (un infinitif): A timeless verb form (=infinity). Gives an action not situated in time. With regular verbs*, indicated by certain predictable endings attached to the stem*. Irregular verbs* have infinitive endings or variant derived forms which do not fit a larger prescribed pattern.

INFLECTED WORD: A noun*, verb*, determiner* or adjective* that adds an ending to a base* form to cause agreement* in gender*/number*/person*/tense*, indicating grammatical function or relationship.

La grande auto française.

Ils répondent.

Il est acteur; elle est actrice.

INFORMATION-ELICITING QUESTIONS: Interrogations (1) containing an interrogative word, (2) which cannot be answered with "yes" or "no."

Quel âge avez-vous?

Comment vous appelez-vous?

Pourquoi avez-vous étudié?

Où êtes-vous étudiant?

INTERROGATION (l'interrogation): Asking a question.

INTERROGATIVE ADJECTIVE (un adjectif interrogatif): A question word asking "which/what + noun".

Quel Quels
Quelle Quelles

Quelle est la capitale du Zaïre?

INTERROGATIVE ADVERB (un adverbe interrogatif): A word which asks "how, when, where, why, how much/ how many?"

Comment allez-vous? Quand partirez-vous?

Pourquoi êtes-vous venu? Combien de frères avez-vous?

INTERROGATIVE FORMULA: Est-ce que. Devoid of lexical meaning in itself. May be attached to any declarative sentence to derive an interrogation. It simply indicates that a question follows. [Similar to the Spanish ¿]. There are no other structural changes in the sentence when est-ce que is used

Est-ce que Paul est arrivé?

Comment est-ce que le prof a prononcé ce mot?

INTERROGATIVE PRONOUN (un pronom interrogatif): A question word used for forming interrogations asking "who, what, whom, preposition + what/whom, which ones"; i.e., questions on the subject, direct object*, indirect object* or object of a preposition*.

Qui Avec/pour/sans...qui
Qui est-ce qui Avec/sur/dans...quoi
Qu'est-ce qui Lequel
Qu'est-ce que Avec/pour/dans....lequel

INTRANSITIVE VERB (un verbe intransitif): A verb which does not take a direct or indirect object*. It may be

a) Complete: Il pense.

b) Linking [verbe copule]: Paul est malade.

INVARIABLE (invariable): Does not change form.

IRREGULAR VERBS (les verbes irréguliers): Verbs which exhibit no particular predictable patterns of derivation of stems* + endings in the various tenses, persons, moods. Certain verbs, however, do show a degree of regularity once the stem and/or endings are known.

LIAISON (la liaison): A phonetic phenomenon of the spoken language only, whereby a final consonant of a word which would be silent if the word were pronounced in isolation, is linked with the initial vowel sound of a following word. Most frequently occurs with final -s:

les_autos ils_ont

ces_hommes les petits_enfants

Also occurs with final -d, which links as a -t:

un grand_homme;

with final -p: J'ai beaucoup_à faire; and final -t:

un petit_enfant.

LINKING: See LIAISON

LITERARY PAST: See PASSE SIMPLE

MAIN CLAUSE: See PRINCIPAL CLAUSE

MASS NOUN: A noun that cannot be counted except in technical jargon. Introduced most often by a partitive article*.

de l'argent de la limonade

du café

MODAL AUXILIARY: See AUXILIARY VERB

MODE (le mode): See MOOD

MOOD (le mode): A form of the verb indicating the manner in which the action is conceived. See INDICATIVE MOOD, SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD, IMPERATIVE MOOD, CONDITIONAL MOOD.

MUTE H (h muet): An initial h of a word which functions as if that word began with a vowel, thus allowing elision* and liaison*.

homme = l'homme

les_ hommes

NEGATION (la négation): An aspect expressing negation of the action or state denoted by the verb.

Il n'est pas ici.

Je ne vois personne.

Il ne vient jamais.

NEGATOR: An element or elements that make a sentence negative. Can be an adverb (pas, jamais, plus), a pronoun (personne, rien) or an adjective (aucun, nul). The French negators are composed of NE + a negative adverb, pronoun or adjective.

NON-PERSONAL NOUN: Refers to anything but people. Stands for things, ideas, abstractions, animals (in certain cases). Can be subject*, direct object*, indirect object*, object of a preposition*.

NOUN (un nom): A word designating a person, thing, idea, abstraction.

un livre la beauté l'existentialisme

des femmes l'honneur la religion

NOUN MARKER: See DETERMINER

NUMBER (le nombre): Concept designating one or more than one. Singular or plural.

OBJECT: See COMPLEMENT

PARTITIVE ARTICLE (un article partitif): A determiner*. Specifies a following noun as part of a whole quantity, not ALL but SOME. The equivalent concept in English is expressed by "some". It is used basically with mass nouns*. It is formed with DE + le, la, l'.

du pain de l'ail

de la salade Je n'ai pas d'argent.

After most negations, before preceding plural adjectives and after expressions of quantity, the partitive article reduces to de.

PASSE COMPOSE: Called "conversational past"*, or passé indéfini*. It is comprised of an auxiliary verb* in the present tense* + a past participle*. It indicates perfected, i.e., completed past action, a change in state or condition. A narrative tense. It is limited in time--either the beginning, ending or duration of the time span are given or implied.

J'ai lu le livre.

Il s'est amusé.

Elle est partie.

PASSE INDEFINI: See PASSE COMPOSE

PASSE SIMPLE: Also called "historical past"* or "literary past"*. Equivalent to the Spanish preterite tense*. It is used in formal writing--novels, essays, etc. Basically the equivalent of the passé compose*, when the latter is used for expressing simple past actions in the spoken language. A narrative tense expressing completed actions in the past.

César vint en Gaule.

PASSE SURCOMPOSE: A past tense roughly equivalent to the plus-que-parfait, occuring after certain conjunctions. It is formed with the passé composé of the auxiliary verb* [avoir, in this case, since no verbs conjugated with être occur in this tense] + a past participle*.

Dès qu'il a eu fini de parler, il est sorti.

PASSIVE VOICE (la voix passive): The subject "receives" or "undergoes" the action of the verb*. In French, the true passive voice is composed of a form of être + a past participle*. In principle, only the direct object* of an active sentence* can become the subject* of a passive sentence. The subject of the active sentence becomes the agent of the passive sentance, introduced by par or de.

L'ennemi a été attaqué par l'armée.

Le prof est aimé de ses étudiants.

PAST ANTERIOR (le passé antérieur): Formed with the passé simple* of the auxiliary verb* + a past participle*. The formal, literary equivalent of the plus-que-parfait.* It indicates that an action occurred in the past PRIOR TO another past action.

Quand Roland mourut, il eut déjà appelé Charlemagne.

PAST PARTICIPLE (un participe passé): A verb form indicating pastness. Used alone, it functions as an adjective*.

Voilà un enfant perdu.

With an auxiliary verb*, it indicates the action that occurred in the time frame established by the tense* of the auxiliary verb*.

Il a couru. Elles s'étaient assises.

PAST SUBJUNCTIVE (le passé du subjonctif): Formed with the present subjunctive* of the auxiliary verb* + a past participle*. Used when the action of the verb in the subordinate clause* is PRIOR TO the action of the verb in the main clause*.

Je regrettais qu'il soit venu. [=had come]

Paul a nié qu'elle ait dit cela. [=had said]

PERFECT [tense] (parfait): Presents an action as completed in the past. Opposed to IMPARFAIT*.

PERSON (la personne): Refers, in some way, to the speaker, the person(s) spoken to, or the person(s) spoken about.

SPEAKER: je, nous, notre, nos, le nôtre, etc.

SPOKEN TO: tu, vous, toi, votre, vos, tes, la tienne, la vôtre, etc.

SPOKEN ABOUT: il, elle, on, ce, ils, elles, leur, ses, le leur, la sienne, etc.

PERSONAL PRONOUN (un pronom personnel): Refers only to people. Can be subject*, direct object*, indirect object*, object of preposition*, possessive*.

PHRASE (une locution): two or more related words that do not contain a subject* and a predicate*; for example, a prepositional phrase*. Opposed to CLAUSE*.

PLEONASTIC NE (ne pléonastique): superfluous, unnecessary. An element found in certain constructions primarily in the written language. It occurs in subordinate clauses*. It has no negative meaning when it occurs alone.

Nous dînerons avant qu'il n'arrive.

J'ai peur qu'elle ne vienne.

Elle est plus riche que vous ne le croyez.

PLUPERFECT TENSE (le plus-que-parfait): Formed with the imperfect* of the auxiliary verb* + a past participle*. As its name implies, it is more past than past. It states that something HAD TAKEN PLACE [HAD HAPPENED] prior to another past action.

Jean avait dîné quand je suis arrivé.

PLUPERFECT SUBJUNCTIVE (le plus-que-parfait du subjonctif): Formed of the imperfect subjunctive* of the auxiliary verb* + a past participle*. A literary tense used in formal, historical writing. Equivalent to the plus-que-parfait* indicative* and the past conditional*.

Il entra sans qu'elle se fussent assises.

POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVE (un adjectif possessif): A determiner*. Indicates possession by replacing a construction with être de or être à. Modifies or determines a noun*. Agrees in gender* and in number* with the thing possessed. The basic form is determined by the possessor.

C'est le livre de Paul. C'est son livre.

Voilà l'auto de Paul et de Guy. Voilà leur auto.

POSSESSIVE PRONOUN (un pronom possessif): A pronoun replacing both the possessor and the thing possessed. In French, it is composed of a definite article* + a possessive pronoun* in the gender* and number* of the thing possessed.

Voilà la moto de Charles. Voilà sa moto.

Voilà la sienne.

PREDICATE: A verb (action word)*. States the action of or on the subject* or which gives its condition or state of being. SIMPLE PREDICATE: The verb(s) alone. COMPLETE PREDICATE: the verb(s) and all objects and modifiers.

Nous avons chanté beaucoup de chansons.

Marie était malade.

PREPOSITION (une préposition): A word used in conjunction with a noun* showing the grammatical function of the noun in the sentence.

dans	par
en	à côté de
sur	le long de
sous	auprès de, etc.

PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE (une locution prépositive): A phrase* introduced by a preposition*. Generally used (a) adverbially, or (b) to indicate possession.

Il s'est caché sous un arbre. C'est le livre de Jean.

Elles sont parties en hâte. Ce livre est à Jean.

PRESENT PARTICIPLE (le participe présent): A verb form ending in -ant, roughly equivalent to the English present participle ending in -ing. The present participle is a verbal: a part of speech derived from a verb but not having usual verb functions. The -ant form has three different uses:

a) VERBAL ADJECTIVE: This form is inflected for gender* and number*.
Il a vu une soucoupe volante.
Elles ont fait un travail intéressant.

b) GERUND: Always preceded by EN + -ant form, either stating or implying simultaneity of action. Frequently TOUT + EN + -ant form is used to stress simultaneity, concession or restriction. This construction refers only to the subject of the verb it modifies.
Tout en ayant raison, elle a refusé de répondre. [=while she was right/although she was right...]
Je l'ai vue en revenant du marché. [=while I was returning]

c) PRESENT PARTICIPLE: A non-inflected construction never preceded by EN refering to the closest noun* (pronoun*) subject. The clause* containing the present participle has verb functions--it can have complements* and it can be negated*. The present participle frequently replaces a relative clause*. It indicates cause, motive, reason, result or that an action took place immediately before or just as another action began.
Parlant à haute voix, elle a expliqué son problème.
J'ai vu une femme revenant du marché. [=she was returning]
Ne sachant que faire, elle s'en est allée.

PRESENT TENSE [indicative] (le présent de l'indicatif): The time of the verb* action is basically NOW, in the present. It is also used for "eternal truths"--statements considered outside of a time frame. The three English present tense forms,
SIMPLE: I speak
PROGRESSIVE: I am speaking
EMPHATIC: I do speak,
are combined into only one form in French: Je parle.

La terre tourne autour du soleil.

Deux et deux font quatre.

La beauté est une qualité.

PRESENT SUBJUNCTIVE (le présent du subjonctif): Used when the action of the verb* in the subordinate clause* is SIMULTANEOUS WITH or FUTURE IN RELATION TO the time of the action of the verb* in the main clause*.

Je regrette qu'il vienne. [=is coming/will come]

Je regrettais qu'il vienne. [=was coming]

PRETERITE: See PASSE SIMPLE

PRIMARY AUXILIARY: See AUXILIARY VERB

PRINCIPAL CLAUSE (la proposition principale): Also called MAIN* or INDEPENDENT* clause. Can stand by itself as a simple sentence*.

Paul est devenu malade et il n'a pas pu aller à la fête.

PRONOMINAL VERBS (les verbes pronominaux): Also called "reflexive verbs"*. They are of two main types:

a) REFLEXIVE: The reflexive object refers back the subject of the sentence. The action of the verb is "reflected" back on the subject*.
Je me vois dans la glace.

b) RECIPROCAL: The action of the verb is directed to/for/at the plural subject. The verb must be plural to be reciprocal. Means " [preposition] each other."
Ils se sont parlé.

See: REFLEXIVE PRONOUN.

PRONOUN (un pronom): A word which stands for or replaces a noun*. It must be in the same gender* and number* as the noun it replaces.

Voilà Mme Baribaud.

Elle est belle.
C'est une Française.
Je la connais.
Je suis sorti avec elle.
Cette auto est la sienne.
Elle s'est cassé la jambe.
C'est une femme que je connais.

PROPER NOUN (un nom propre): The capitalized name of a person, place, or thing.

Paul	la France	le Catholicisme
Marie	l'Europe	l'Existentialisme
les Dupont	une Citroën	la O. N. U.

REFLEXIVE PRONOUN (un pronom réfléchi): A conjunctive pronoun* functioning as object of a verb* and in the same person* and number* as the subject* of the verb. May function as a direct object* or indirect object*.

Je me suis levé.
Nous voulons nous amuser.
Elles s'étaient assises.

REFLEXIVE VERB (un verbe réfléchi): See PRONOMINAL VERB

REGULAR VERB (un verbe régulier): A verb showing a predictable pattern of stems* + inflectional endings* in all tenses* and moods*.

RELATIVE CLAUSE (une proposition relative): A subordinate clause* introduced by a relative pronoun*.

Voilà une femme... qui est belle.
que j'adore.
dont tu as parlé.
avec qui il sort.

RELATIVE PRONOUN (un pronom relatif): A word used to connect two clauses* in order to make a complex sentence* by avoiding repetition of a noun. The relative pronoun immediately follows its antecedent* and has a grammatical function IN the relative clause*. Most relative pronouns do not overtly show the gender* and/or number* of the noun* they replace [forms of lequel do].

J'ai un livre. Le livre est sur la table. =
J'ai un livre qui est sur la table.

The form of the relative pronoun is determined by its function in the relative clause*: subject*, direct object*, object of preposition*.

ROOT: See BASE

SECONDARY AUXILIARY: See AUXILIARY VERB

SENTENCE (la phrase): A basic unit of expression which may stand alone. All sentences must contain a verb* (predicate*). The subject* may be optional, since in imperative* constructions, it is only implied.

Jean travaille. Travaillez!

Jean étudie le français. Jean et Luc travaillent et gagnent leur vie.

SIMPLE INVERSION (l'inversion simple): Used primarily in asking questions. The subject pronoun* (and at time the subject noun*) is placed after the verb. Postposed subject pronouns are attached to the verb with a hyphen. Simple inversion also occurs in interrupted direct quotations* and at the end of direct quotations.

Viens-tu me voir? Où va Paul?

"Il viendra, dit-il, quand il aura le temps."

SIMPLE SENTENCE (une phrase simple): Contains only one clause*--a principal clause*--and no subordinate clause(s)*.

Paul viendra me voir. Il est étudiant.

Paul, va-t'en!

SIMPLE TENSE (un temps simple): A verb tense* or form that has no auxiliary verb*. All information is given by the subject pronoun* and the verb*: time, person*, number*, mood*.

JE PARLERAI

JE: first person singular
PARL: the action
-ER-: future
-AI: future ending for first person singular

STEM: See BASE

STRESSED PRONOUN: See DISJUNCTIVE PRONOUN

STRONG PRONOUN: See DISJUNCTIVE PRONOUN

SUBJECT (le sujet): In active sentences*, who or what "performs" the action of the verb*.

Jean va en France. Ils vont au cinéma.
C'est dommage. Ceux qui étudient réussiront.

In passive sentences*, who or what "receives" the action of the verb:

Le livre a été publié. Jean sera puni.

SUBJECT PRONOUN (le sujet pronominal): A pronoun functioning as the subject* of the verb*.

Il est riche. C'est important.

SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD (le mode subjonctif): Expresses a doubt, a condition contrary to fact, a wish, a regret, a concession, a supposition, a personal or emotional reaction. It is an affective form of the verb*--it pertains to feelings or emotions or personal reactions. It is almost always introduced by que and is found in most cases in a subordinate clause*.

Elle veut que je vienne.

C'est dommage qu'ils soient absents.

Je suis heureux que tu aies pu venir.

Vous doutez de ce qu'il ait raison?

SUBORDINATE CLAUSE(une proposition subordonnée): Also called a DEPENDENT* clause. It depends on the principal clause* to complete its meaning. The ideas in the subordinate clause are subordinate in importance to the basic meaning of the sentence. Subordinate clauses are most frequently introduced by subordinating conjunctions*.

Elle regrettait qu'il soit malade.

Le livre dont j'ai besoin n'est pas à la bibliothèque.

SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTION (une conjonction de subordination): See CONJUNCTION

SUBSTANTIVE (un substantif): See NOUN

TENSE (le temps): The time of the action of a verb*--present, past, future. Tenses are simple* or compound*.

Je parle	J'avais parlé
J'ai parlé	J'aurai parlé
Je parlerai	J'aurais parlé
Je parlai	...que j'aie parlé

TONIC PRONOUN: See DISJUNCTIVE PRONOUN

TRANSITIVE VERB (un verbe transitif): A verb which can take a direct* or indirect object*.

Il écrit une lettre. Elle écrit une lettre à sa

Il parle français. mère.

UNSTRESSED PRONOUN: See CONJUNCTIVE PRONOUN

VERB (un verbe): A word stating or asserting a condition, state of being or action. It is the main, core element of a sentence*. You must have a verb to have a sentence.

Il parle français. Parle!

VERBAL ADJECTIVE: See PRESENT PARTICIPLE

VERB SATELLITE: See CONJUNCTIVE PRONOUN

VERB STEM (la racine d'un verbe): The "action" of a verb* minus any ending which situates the verb in time or identifies it as an infinitive or participle.

PARL(ER) FIN(IR) ATTEND(RE)

VOICE (la voix): The distinct form which indicates the relationship of the subject to the verb. See ACTIVE and PASSIVE voices.

WEAK PRONOUN: See CONJUNCTIVE PRONOUN

YES-NO QUESTIONS: Interrogations (1) containing no interrogative word, (2) that cannot be answered except with "yes" or "no."

Tu es venu?

Est-ce qu'ils sont ici?

Luc a-t-il acheté le livre?

Pauline est venue, n'est-ce pas?

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December 1978